

September 20, 2021

Honorable Robert D. Drain
Judge
United States Bankruptcy Court
Southern District of New York
300 Quarropas Street
White Plains NY 10601-4140

FILED
U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT
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S.D. OF N.Y.

Your Honor:

My name is Rob Gresser and I am writing in regards to the settlement in the bankruptcy case of Purdue Pharma. I have worked in healthcare for 15 years as an ED Tech and EMT and completed one year of medical school before realizing that medicine has turned into a field of which I no longer wish to be a part as a provider. In my opinion, the practices, especially of emergency medicine, have turned patient care into nothing more than the patient mills that they have professed to abhor with regards to pain management. Patients per hour seen is the rule and the new mantra is "Treat Em and Street Em!" Rather than solving underlying causes of patients' problems, they rely on the mistaken assumption that they will follow up with a primary care doctor or a specialist for their issue.

The reason for my letter is that Purdue Pharma and the other drug makers are not totally to blame for the opioid crisis. From my time spent working in the ED, I saw doctors spend as little time as possible with their patients and assumed nurses would educate them on the use of pain medications. The nurses, burdened with too many patients, often brush through their discharge instructions with little to no conversation about the use of pain medication. I began to take upon myself to discuss with them about appropriate use. However, I was continually told that it was outside the scope of my practice and I should stop immediately. However, without my intervention, these patients would have received nothing except some printed instructions that are quite vague.

Since leaving the medical profession, I was a victim of two assaults by the same person that resulted in a traumatic brain injury and complex complicated migraines, which occur when my brain periodically swells. I have been given the choice between steroids or pain medication for the rest of my life possibly. Steroids will leave me bloated and looking like the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man from "Ghostbusters". Pain medication can be addictive if you don't use it correctly. However, it was the lesser of the two evils. I have been on pain medication for 4 years now and my brain injury is progressing in its recovery. Because I know how to realistically view pain and that the "euphoric" feeling you feel when first taking the medication goes away after a little time of use. It is those times that you have to see if the pain is being relieved, not how much it takes to get the "euphoric" feeling, to know if the medication is working. For several years now, I have been quite outspoken that the medical community bears a lot of the blame for the opioid crisis. However, the government refuses to acknowledge this culpability because it might ruin the image of medical care providers.

I am not sure if this is possible or how to go about making this happen, but I would like to see as part of the Purdue Pharma settlement that the American Medical Association (AMA), American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and the various nursing boards who regulate physician assistants advanced practice nurse practitioners (who can prescribe independently) that they develop new rules for medical providers that apply across the board requirements for educating patients on the proper use of pain medication. I believe that nurses should also be held to a standard of a certain level of education being given to the patient. If medical providers and nurses only spent a few more minutes with the patient engaging in proper education with the patient, much of this opioid crisis could be averted. In fact, I estimate that at least half of the patients would closely follow the instructions given to them. This problem is affecting those of us who truly need pain medication. Without my pain medication, my headaches can advance to a point where I begin to have seizures from the intracranial pressure and it begins to resemble symptoms of a stroke. I agree that there exists a problem, but a little more education could easily solve this problem. As I stated, I am not sure how to go about solving this issue or bringing in the proper people to make these changes. However, I know you are in a position with this case to possibly do something such as making a statement or perhaps point me in the proper direction.

I thank you for your time and for taking the time to consider my request and/or point me in the proper direction to help in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Gresser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rob" being more prominent than the last name "Gresser".

Rob Gresser BS, MA, MST, MS, EMT-B
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